



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ANTIQUE SCALE COLLECTORS

President's Newsletter

Number 59. July, 1993.

A TEMPORARY SETBACK.

As much as we hate to see it happen, for the first time in our 16-year history of publishing EQUILIBRIUM, we've had to delay the publication of an issue, namely the one due this summer and dated July, 1993. We hasten to add that the setback is temporary and something we couldn't help, as these past few weeks our editor, Diana Crawford-Hitchins, has had to face two rather serious personal problems having to do with her own health and that of her son, Andrew. The good news is that the worst has come and gone, and both Diana and Andrew are on the mend. With that to be grateful for and with Diana's capabilities restored, we'll make amends by publishing both the July and October issues in early Fall and mailing them together to our members at that time. We're certain you understand and we thank you for your forbearance.

POST CONVENTION REPORT.

Our May, 1993, conclave in Baltimore lived up to our every expectation, and turned out to be one of the best we've had in many a year. Jerry and Mary Katz, our convention co-chairpersons, did an exemplary job and everything went off without a hitch.

(over)

One of the several highlights was the tour of Baltimore, replete with historical landmarks, and another was the specialty restaurants where we lunched and dined on a variety of Chesapeake Bay specialties (sauteed soft-shelled crab, crabcakes, crab gumbo, crab you name it). Camaraderie was the order of the day, the Silent Auction was a huge success, and the program on Saturday and Sunday satisfied everyone's quest for metrology lore. Our special thanks to Jerry and Mary and their committee of Gloria and Ralph Lipfert, Steve and Riva-Jill Ginsberg, and Bill Doniger; to those members who participated in Show & Tell; and to Gene Mahoney, George Mallis, Jerry Katz, and English member Bob Holdaway, all of whom collectively educated us on diverse aspects of the hobby so dear to our hearts. In addition to Bob Holdaway (a most droll and entertaining fellow) representing our British brethren, our international visitors comprised Eileen Park from Western Australia (with us for the second year running), and Harvey and Alana Kotler and Gary Batz of Canada. And for those members who couldn't be with us in Baltimore, we've included in this mailing a copy of the convention program to give you an idea of the good times shared by all who were there. Which logically leads us to the next Newsletter item, namely...

SAN FRANCISCO IN 1994.

Yes, the destination city has been approved by your ISASC directors, the dates set, and the hotel selected. Even though much in the way of detailed information will be coming your way in the next few months, now's the time to mark your calendar and make your plans. The dates are Thursday, May 12, to Sunday, May 15, and our hostelry is the ANA Hotel (pronounced A.N.A.), just two blocks from Union Square. It's a first-rate property (formerly the Meridien), and has just undergone a multi-million dollar renovation.

Also, to make sure our plans are carried out in a timely and efficient way, the twin posts of convention co-chairperson have been assumed by Ruth Willard and Shirley Mohr, long-time members and long-time San Francisco residents. This is the third time in our 16 years of convening that we've met in San Francisco, and the reasons are simple: It's a fascinating city, and every time we've been there, it's turned out to be a memorable occasion; the program offers something new to do and some place else to visit; and each time we invariably set an attendance record (aided, of course, by the fact that close to 60 of our members reside in California). 1994 should be no different, and we all can look forward to a gala time.

ANOTHER CATALOG FOR COLLECTORS.

Those of us who are long-time scale collectors are familiar with the name Hanson. Originally a Chicago-based scale manufacturer, the company was established in 1888 and in a matter of time became quite prominent. It made a wide assortment of scales and continues to do so today under the Hanson name as a division of Sunbeam Corporation headquartered in Laurel, Mississippi. And now we're pleased to offer our members two mid-1930's Hanson catalogs, compiled as one and comprising 81 pages. The combined publication contains a variety of scales, each one described, illustrated and priced, along with scoops, carrying cases, and promotional materials for stores and other sales outlets. Types of scales include physician's, diet, bathroom, nursery, family, dairy, kitchen, postal, utility, coin-operated, and penny counters. All this, handsomely bound in a wood-grained vinyl cover with gold-stamped title, is now available through ISASC for the mere sum of \$20, including shipping. And to make buying one

(over)

a simple proposition, enclosed is an easy-to-use order form. Need we say more, other than first-come, first-served?

AND ON THE SAME SUBJECT...

reading materials, that is, enclosed you'll find our current library list of offerings. If you're a new member, or a not-so-new one whose metrology library could stand some expanding, here's your chance to do yourself a favor. Just peruse the list (both sides) and before you know it, something will catch your eye and your day will be made. And by the way, we've just gone back on press with A Short History of Weighing, a library staple, and it's available again for the same tempting price of \$18.

OUR YEARLY SPECIAL THANKS.

It's probably no surprise to most members, but we're now approaching the third year of our Benefactor Program, and we're pleased to report that our second year's efforts to supplement our fixed income were just as successful as our first. For those members new to ISASC, you should know that we've always been committed to the highest of standards, and to make sure we maintain them, we've found it necessary to rely on our members each year -- on a purely voluntary basis -- to contribute to our Benefactor Program. Their response has been most generous, and by way of thanks, we're enclosing a list of those who most recently saw fit to help our common cause. We're getting ready for next year's solicitation efforts, and we hope that those who have helped in the past will continue to do so, and will be joined by those who are agreeable to becoming a "Benefactor Booster."

A COMING TOGETHER OF SCALES AND STAMPS.

In the mid-1950's and in the years that followed, yours truly came across, quite by chance, three or four stamps from as many countries, each depicting a scale commemorating one or another occasion. Some 35 or 40 years after these few but noteworthy (to a scale collector) stamps were acquired, a knowledgeable philatelist known to us conjectured that there undoubtedly were many more such stamps, and the challenge was too much to resist.

After considerable detective work, we tracked down Don Smith, executive director of the American Topical Association (comprising collectors of specialty stamps), who, in turn, found for us a computer-generated list of more than 400 stamps depicting scales that have been issued in the last 100 years or so by countries ranging from Afghanistan to Zaire and every sovereign state in between. And now that we know all this, for those ISASC members who have more than a passing interest in stamps and would like a copy of the 10-page list (broken down by country, date, pictorial subject matter, etc.), let us know and we'll provide you with same. And just so you know, a facsimile/photo of each listed stamp can be located in the Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalog (available in a multi-volume set at your local library).

CHICAGO VISITORS.

This past spring, several ISASC members had occasion to visit our fair city, and we spent some time showing them the sights. In late April, Dale and Don Goldman of San Diego came our way for

(over)

several days to attend an architects' convention, and during a free day the three of us lunched at The Berghoff, a famed German restaurant, toured some landmark buildings on LaSalle Street, and walked the length of Wacker Drive from the Merchandise Mart to Sears Tower. It was their first visit to Chicago, and they eagerly took in the myriad sights.

Next on the docket was Eileen Park of Western Australia, here to visit her son and daughter-in-law in suburbia before heading out for our Baltimore convention. While in Chicago, Eileen managed an antiquing foray, a visit to ISASC's office coupled with a Chinese luncheon, and a shopping spree on State Street.

And to Chicago after attending our convention in Baltimore came Bob Holdaway of Shropshire, England (via Akron and a stay with his granddaughter). Bob, too, was a first-time visitor to the Windy City, and spent an action-packed two days with the Steins, viewing four states from the 100-floor-high skydeck of Sears Tower, cruising up the Chicago River and along the lakefront, walking the length of The Magnificent Mile and Wacker Drive, visiting the Chicago Board of Trade and Options Exchange, and dining at Gulliver's, famed for its collection of chandeliers, sculpture and art objects. Bob then returned to Akron, gathered his belongings and impressions, and flew to Toronto where he spent a whirlwind several hours touring the city under the able escort services of Harvey and Alana Kotler, before flying on to England and home.

BIBLIOGRAPHY UPDATE.

The news is all good concerning this most important project. Eric and Judy Soslau have enthusiastically taken on the job, and at our convention in Baltimore, they reported that their initial efforts have resulted in the compilation of approximately two

hundred listings of publications having to do with scales. With this as a first-rate beginning, their next step is to produce the first draft of the bibliography, which then will be sent to a number of members owning extensive metrology libraries, along with a supply of questionnaires. This will enable those members to add the names of scale publications in their possession to the Soslau's master list, thereby moving the project along to phase two. Considering the progress being made by Eric and Judy, we're hoping that the target date for the first printed version will coincide with our San Francisco convention May 12 to 15. Meanwhile, we'll keep you informed via our next several Newsletters.

IF YOU'RE EUROPE-BOUND...

especially this coming fall, it very well might be an opportune time to tie in a visit to England and the Euro-Chapter's semi-annual convention on Sunday, October 24. These get-togethers are invariably very informative and entertaining, to say nothing of the hospitality extended to American visitors at every turn by British and Continent members. For details about both the fall, 1993, and Spring, 1994, meetings, write or call Brian Stimpson, 6 Sycamore Avenue, Allestree, Derby DE3 2HZ, England (telephone 0332-559-068).

AND IF YOU'RE HEADED FOR CANADA..

you should know that from now 'til April 15, 1994, the National Postal Museum in Hull, Quebec, is presenting Heavy Metal, "a window of discovery on the use of postal scales." The exhibit, comprising a total of 35 postal scales, is supplemented by an assortment of 19th Century catalog advertisements and historical

(over)

photographs, and is on display at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, of which the National Postal Museum is a part. The NPM's entire collection of postal scales numbers close to 200, and it may be that some sweet talk directed to the right person prior to making the trip could result in a behind-the-scenes tour. Our contact at the NPM is Curator Susan McLeod O'Reilly, an ISASC Associate Member, whose phone number is 819/776-8470. 'Nuff said.

IF YOU'RE INTO POSTAL SCALES...

perhaps have a thing for all things postal, and live in, or have occasion to visit, Washington, D.C., you should know that the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum just opened this past July 30. The "highly interactive" museum's exhibits tell about the history of mail service and Pony Express, the art of letters, and the beauty and lore of postage stamps. Housed in the museum is the nation's stamp and postal history collection, "the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in the world," along with five major exhibit galleries about different facets of mail communication and history. Within the exhibit galleries are 30 interactive areas, including 17 video presentations on topics ranging from America's railway mail clerks, star route contractors, letter carriers and transportation, to stories about mail train wrecks and robberies, and postal workers. All in all, it sounds like a fascinating sojourn for all of us.

SCALES OF JUSTICE, EGYPTIAN STYLE.

This past winter at a Chicago art show, we came across the works of Jan and Mel Fleck, a gifted duo who express their artistic talents in the form of some absolutely beautiful intaglio etchings. One in particular that caught our metrology eye

depicts the Scales of Justice as interpreted in ancient Egyptian mythology. The full-color etching portrays, in panoramic style, the priestess Anhai in the Hall of Double Justice having her purity tested by the weighing of her heart; the god Thoth comparing the weight of Anhai's heart to the "feather of truth;" the Goddess Maat presiding over the scene; and the god Horus leading Anhai to the weighing ceremony. The etching, featuring several scales, is pictured on the enclosed flyer which also lists its size, unframed and framed. The cost, direct from the artist, is \$275 unframed (plus \$8 shipping), and \$350 framed (plus \$20 shipping). And along with the etching comes a fascinating detailed history of the series of trials that required successful passing to insure the transition from death to eternal life. That is, according to ancient Egyptian lore.

SCALES FOR SALE.

News of our existence brought forth a letter from Thomas Flanagan, 236 Piazza di Luna, Venice, Florida 34285; phone 813/488-3585. It seems Mr. Flanagan has nine scales to sell, ranging from a Howe floor scale, a torsion balance, and two Pitney Bowes postal scales to a baby scale, a scientific counter scale, and three steelyards (two quite old, one fancy brass from Italy). We advised him that photos, with prices, probably would be the best way to do business with any interested members, and so he's agreed to have them available by mid-September. Members should contact Mr. Flanagan direct.

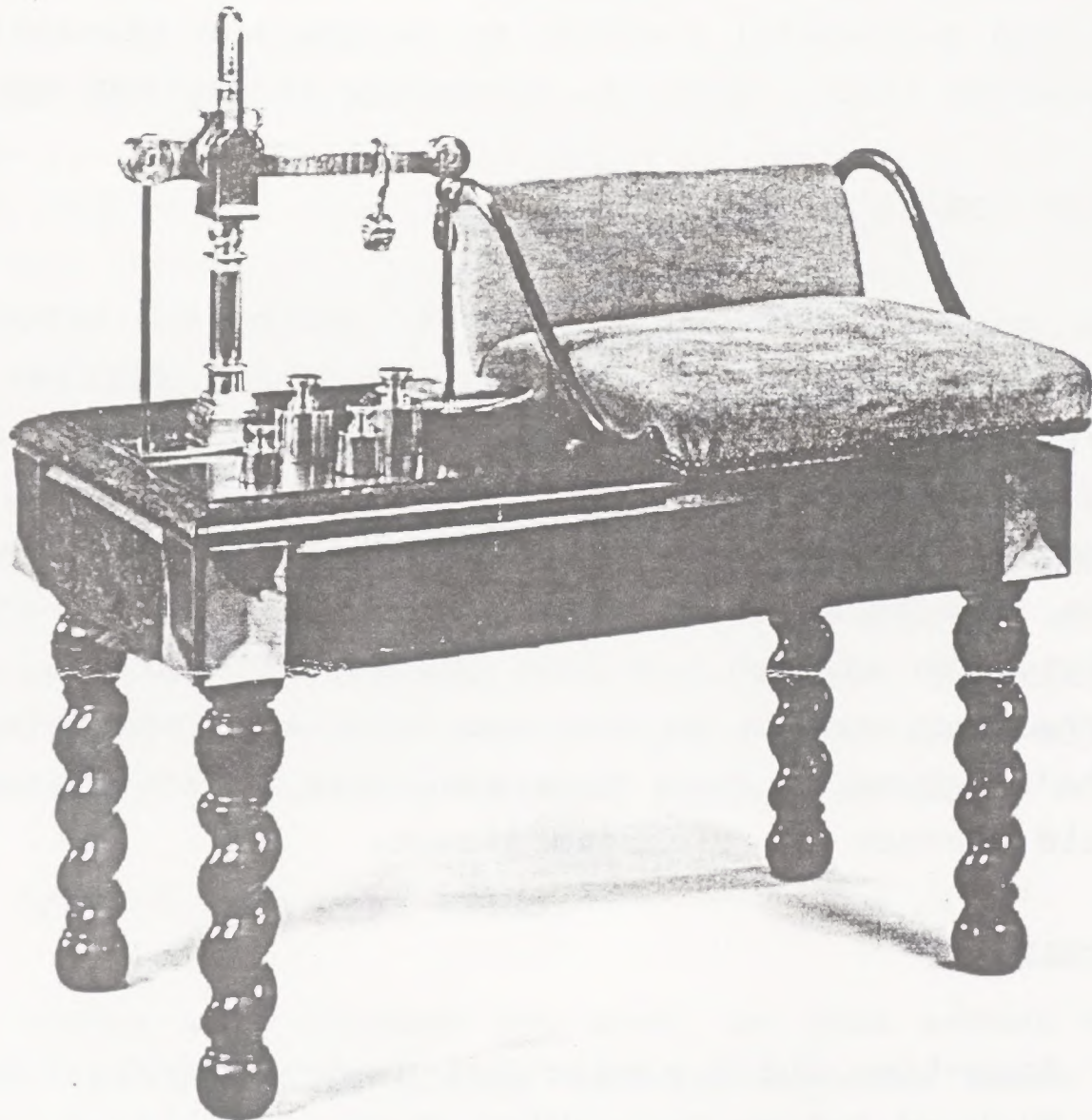
MISCELLANY.

** Long-time Dutch member Lou Boogaard wrote U.S. member Richard LeSchander asking about a Chatillon 40-lb.

(over)

capacity spring scale labelled "Cow Testing Balance." Lou had seen it but wanted to learn something about it, so we're sharing his inquiry with all our members in the hope that someone can enlighten him. If so, direct your response to L.A. Uit den Boogaard, Anna Van Saksenlaan 10, 2082 BG Santpoort-Zuid, Holland.

** In case you're wondering how much rare scales go for at auction these days, here's what a beauty of a jockey scale sold for recently. (Clipping courtesy of Lew Weiss.)



This VICTORIAN BRASS, OAK AND ELMWOOD JOCKEY'S SCALE weighed in heavier than its presale estimate of \$2,500-3,500, bringing \$3,800 at Christie's on January 30. New York/Fine English Furniture, Objects of Art and Chinese Export Porcelain/34"x 17½"/second half 19th C.

** Lew Weiss (our busy, busy correspondent) sent us an interesting article from the June 2 New York Times that pictured a licensed herbalist in a Singapore herbal restaurant measuring (weighing) herbs used in meal preparation. The photo was accompanied by a description of various exotic dishes and their herbal-induced benefits. Among the favorites were Dried Scallops and Bird's Nest Noodles (for quick energy), Cinnamon Curry Rice (to relieve fatigue), Chicken with Black Mushroom Soup (to aid digestion), and Pear Soup with Fritillary Powder (to soothe the throat and stomach). The article concluded by noting the herbalist's post-meal ritual of taking the pulse of each diner to determine his or her fitness, which invariably was judged "just fine."

** Another unusual story passed on to us by Lew was reported in both the New York Times and Wall Street Journal. It had to do with a London auction by Christie's this past May 19, at which a 19th century calculator sold for \$11.8 million, the largest recorded price ever paid for a scientific instrument. It seems that Christie's expected it to go for about \$30,000, but a bidding war ensued between a Swiss collector, Edgar Mannheimer (who ultimately won out), and an unidentified bidder, with the sale price astounding Christie's as well as the entire art world. Most pertinent to those of us who collect rare scales is the fact that the calculator was designed in 1760 by Philipp Matthaus Hahn, a German master clockmaker who also was a scalemaker/inventor. As Lew points out, mention is made of Hahn's scales on pages 572, 607 and

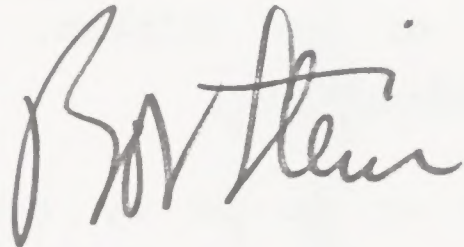
(over)

608 of EQM, as well as on page 67 of Kisch's book, Scales & Weights. Which poses the question, as Lew puts it, "What would an original scale by Hahn be worth?"

AND ON THAT WEIGHTY NOTE...

we'll take our leave of you until this coming October. All in all, everything's just fine with ISASC, with new members joining regularly, as the enclosed directory supplement indicates, and our chapter membership presently at 267.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bob Stein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" and last name "Stein" clearly distinguishable.